

## Summary of Documents Disclosed

### *July 2020*

1. Covering email to item 2
2. Letter from Call It Out to the Scottish Government's Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity (ERG)
3. Annex to letter included as item 2
4. Covering email to item 5
5. Reply from the secretariat to the ERG to Call It Out

### *August/September 2020*

6. Further correspondence in response to item 5, from Call It Out to the Scottish Government – requesting ministerial meeting
7. Response from the office for the Minister for Equalities and Older People
8. Enquiry from Call It Out to the Scottish Government, as regards item 7
9. Response from Scottish Government, reissuing item 7
10. Reply from Call It Out to the Scottish government to item 7
  
11. Email correspondence between Scottish Government officials and Call It Out, concerning the arranging of an upcoming meeting

### *November 2020*

12. Email correspondence inviting Call It Out to stakeholder engagement meetings concerning changes to the curriculum.
13. Combined meeting minutes from the stakeholder engagement sessions, which were attended by representatives from Call It Out, including two annexes
  
14. Email correspondence between Call It Out and the Scottish Government, concerning the National Records of Scotland COVID-19 statistical update.

### *October/November/December 2020*

15. Email from Call It Out to the Scottish Government, including note of meeting on 13 October
16. Email response from Scottish Government Officials to Call It Out responding to issues raised in item 15
17. Formal response from the Scottish Government to Call It Out.

### *January 2021*

18. Letter sent to Scottish Ministers by the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network, of which Call It Out are a signatory

### *May 2021*

19. Further email correspondence between Call It Out and Scottish Government

### *June 2021*

20. Email correspondence between Scottish Government Education officials and Call It Out about a stakeholder network group

## Documents for Disclosure

### 1. Email from Call it Out to the Scottish Government covering letter at item 2– 29 July 2020

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]

**Sent:** 29 July 2020 23:33

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:**

A chairde

I am attaching a letter, from Irish community organisations in Scotland, which is intended for the Expert Reference Group on Covid 19 and Ethnic Minorities. I am copying in the relevant Scottish Government officials and EHRC Scotland for their information and attention. I am also attaching an appendix to the letter which covers our response to the statistical matters referred to in the letter.

I look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency.

Is mise le meas

[redacted]

Call it Out

The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

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This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.

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## 2. Letter from Call it Out to the ERG referred to in item 1 – 29 July 2020

To the Chair and members of the Expert Reference Group on Covid 19 and Ethnicity

A chairde

The undersigned groups who represent sections of the Irish community in Scotland have noted the publication of the National Records of Scotland data on deaths from Covid 19 by ethnicity. We note, with dismay, the fact that the report, while providing the number of deaths by Census ethnicity categories, fails to relate these to the size of the various communities and thereby fails to highlight the fact that the Irish community has the highest death rate of Covid 19 of any BAME group relative to its size in the population. The failure of the report to conduct further analysis (of the kind reported for some other communities) given the fact that we have the highest death rate, is a serious dereliction of the duty of government to our community and requires to be addressed.

We have engaged with the NRS team in writing and in an online meeting organised by the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network (EMNRN) 'Data, Health & Social Outcomes Group Meeting' on 16/7/2020. The substance of this exchange is that the NRS team averred that they did not conduct further analysis for the Irish community because there was doubt re the quality of the data for Irish ethnicity. We see no note in the report that such doubts have been investigated for other ethnic groups and, on consideration, we do not accept its validity. We have attached an appendix to this letter which contains more detail as to why we do not accept its validity and asks further questions of the NRS.

We note that the Scottish Government has set up an Expert Reference Group on Covid 19 and Ethnicity. We insist that our community's status as an ethnic minority community of Scotland is understood and respected by ERG members and that we are given equal recognition alongside all other BAME communities in Scotland with whom we stand in solidarity during this challenging and difficult period. Furthermore, we request that a relative mortality risk assessment is carried out by NRS based upon the number of Irish deaths and our population share indicated in the 2011 census. This would ensure that Scotland's devolved health institutions have sight of this vulnerability, that this information informs future public health messaging in respect of an acceleration of virus spread and crucially that these citizens are afforded the dignity of what was identified as their ethnicity by loved ones or by themselves. To ensure that the problem of non-recognition is tackled appropriately we also call on Scottish Ministers, NRS and all other relevant bodies to unambiguously recognise us, as we do, as an ethnic minority community of Scotland.

We, as a community, have become inured to being ignored by government and excluded from discussions which affects our lives and well-being, but we are now calling on the Scottish Government, without further delay, to begin to engage with us; to ensure that the reasons behind the high death rate are investigated and understood and to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the Irish community in Scotland. The first step in that process is to ensure that government engages with our community in the same way that they engage with other minority communities and that is to recognise us; to consult with us; to listen to us.

Le meas

[redacted], Comhaltas in Britain [redacted]  
[redacted] , [redacted] , Conradh na Gaeilge Glaschú

(as béarla: [redacted], Gaelic League, Glasgow)

[redacted], [redacted] Call it Out: the campaign against anti-Irish racism and anti-Catholic bigotry

[redacted], Coiste Cuimnheachain An Gorta Mór

(as béarla: Great Hunger Memorial Committee)

[redacted], [redacted] GAA Scotland

[redacted], Irish Diaspora in Scotland Association

[redacted], [redacted] Article 12 in Scotland

### 3. **Annex to letter [item 2] sent by Call it Out to the ERG – 29 July 2020**

#### **Response to: Analysis of deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland, by ethnic group Data up to 14 June 2020, National Records of Scotland, Published on 8 July 2020**

Here we set out our response to the explanations we have been offered by the NRS team as to why the fact that the Irish community has the highest death rate relative to its population size was not analysed further.

Our understanding is that the data was collected from death registration records and that this was supplemented by Census 2011 data due to the number of cases where no ethnicity was given. This reduced the number of incomplete records across all categories.

In the document itself the number of deaths for each ethnic group was given. The population size was not given, but this is easily obtainable from the Census 2011 data. On initial inspection of the data provided in the report, the number of deaths for the Irish population in Scotland looked high. When measured as a proportion of the population, it is the highest of all ethnic groups.

The report goes on to analyse further, using qualitative dependent variable techniques, the death rates of a selected group of ethnic minority populations. It does not do this for the Irish population and, indeed, no mention, far less commentary, is made about the high number of deaths among the Irish. At the end of the report, there is a paragraph which says that the additional analysis was not carried out for other ethnic minority groups “due to the number of completed records for deaths involving COVID-19 in these groups.” This was clearly not an issue for the Irish group which had a higher numbers of deaths than other groups which were analysed further.

When asked to explain the reasons why the data for the Irish group was not analysed further, we were told that this was because the data was not robust. In an email communication with a member of the Irish community in Scotland, one of the NRS team indicated that the ‘White ethnic’ group was considered further and that the Annual Population Survey (2019) was also considered alongside the death registration records and the 2011 Census. It was stated that there was a ‘considerable degree of inconsistency/and or movement between the White Irish and White Scottish categories’.

A methodology note was published alongside the report (although this is not mentioned in the report itself) and this contains the same explanation which is referred to above. What is not explained is the following:

- Why the data for the White ethnic group was subjected to further scrutiny?
- How a sample survey such as the Annual Population Survey can usefully add to data which is collected on an individual basis and covers the entire population of interest. To put it simply, if a specific individual says they are Irish in the Census and/or their ethnic identity is described as Irish by whoever registers their death, how can a sample survey call that data into question?
- In addition to being a sample-based survey and not a whole population survey such as the Census, the APR questions on ethnicity, according to the Office of National Statistics, can vary when there are changes to the way the question is asked. The current questions offer the respondent an initial choice of ethnic categories which does not include Irish. Depending on what category is chosen, respondents are routed to a further question which may, or may not, include Irish. This could, in theory result in variations in the data.
- However, the way that this question is asked was revised in 2011 and analysis by the Office of National Statistics shows that this had an impact on some ethnic groups. Specifically the

numbers reporting White which had previously been very stable, fell and some other groups appeared to change. Those most affected appeared to be Mixed/multiple ethnic groups and Indian and Pakistani. These groups showed 'strong short-term volatility'. No change or volatility in the Irish group was noted. So what, specifically, did the NRS team find in the sample-based APS which caused them to doubt the individual-specific and whole-population data for the Irish community which was collected from the death registers and the 2011 Census?

We do not think the explanation given for the failure to conduct further analysis bears scrutiny. On any view, either the data is not robust and should not have been reported, or the data is robust and should have been analysed further.

Crucially, if the former is the case, what does the Scottish Government intend to do about the fact that the National Records of Scotland team are telling them that they do not have sufficient data to exercise their duties and obligations to our community because they cannot identify who we are?

Finally, what does this mean for the Expert Reference Group who were '...established to consider and inform the Scottish Government's approach in relation to the impacts of COVID-19 on Minority Ethnic (ME) communities' and to 'advise on proposed actions to mitigate the harms felt by ME communities in relation to COVID-19'. Precisely how are they proposing to carry out that remit in relation to the Irish community in Scotland?

#### 4. Covering email to Scottish Government response [item 5]– 30 July 2020

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 30 July 2020 16:22  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Letter to ERG

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of Irish community organisations. Please find a response attached.

Kind regards,  
[redacted]

Equality Unit | Equality and Human Rights Division | Scottish Government | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh  
| EH6 6QQ | 0131 244 3634 | [redacted]

**From:** Call-It-Out  
**Sent:** 29 July 2020 23:33  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:**

A chairde

I am attaching a letter, from Irish community organisations in Scotland, which is intended for the Expert Reference Group on Covid 19 and Ethnic Minorities. I am copying in the relevant Scottish Government officials and EHRC Scotland for their information and attention. I am also attaching an appendix to the letter which covers our response to the statistical matters referred to in the letter.

I look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency.

Is mise le meas

[redacted]

Call it Out  
The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

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**5. Letter response [attached to item 4] to Call it Out and other Irish community organisations from the ERG – July 2020**

30 July 2020

Dear Irish Community Organisation Representatives,

Thank you for your letter of 29 July to the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity, in relation to the risks posed to the Irish community by COVID-19.

In line with Scottish Government policy, the Expert Reference Group (ERG) will use the term 'Minority Ethnic' to refer to the groups, communities and individuals included in the scope of its work. This is intended to be inclusive of all Minority Ethnic groups in Scotland, including White Minority Ethnic Groups such as the White Irish community. The ERG's investigations and interventions will focus on the particular Minority Ethnic communities where the data and evidence shows that they are at risk of disproportionate impacts, either immediate or longer-term, as a result of COVID-19.

The role of the ERG is to advise the Scottish Government on proposed actions to mitigate the harms caused to Minority Ethnic communities by COVID-19. We welcome your letter, and would like to reassure you that the issues raised within it will be considered by the ERG as they formulate their advice and recommendations.

As I am sure you will understand, the ERG is not able to comment on the methodology of the NRS report, and I note from your letter that you are already in contact with NRS directly on this point.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

Secretariat to the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity

## 6. Call it Out response to the letter from the ERG – 5 August 2020

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]  
**Sent:** 05 August 2020 12:33  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: Letter to ERG

A chara

Thank you for your very prompt response to our letter outlining our concerns about the evidence of the impact of Covid19 on our community. We are assuming, given the speed of your response, that you intended sending a fuller response once the ERG had time to consider the matters raised in our letter. We would very much appreciate this.

However, in the meantime, we will make one or two points in response to your brief message. The first is that it is not acceptable for a group tasked with addressing evidence on the impact of Covid19 on the BAME community, to decide not to interrogate the data provided to them by a Government body such as the NRS. It is the responsibility of government to ensure that they are in a position to meet their obligations to minority ethnic communities so, in our view, the ERG must insist that the NRS provides a fuller, clearer explanation as to why the data is not 'robust'.

Only two things can arise from this: either the NRS team are able to do this, and, in that event, the ERG has to take steps to advise government that it has a responsibility to a community that it cannot identify; or they are unable to convincingly make this case, in which case our original question stands ie what further analysis will be taken and measures put in place to address the serious implications of this evidence? Indeed, one wonders why, if the data is not robust, it was included in the report in the first place. In the meantime, we request a meeting, as a matter of urgency, with the Minister responsible for this issue, who, we believe, is a member of this group and who should now be aware of our concerns. Could you please confirm that the members of the ERG have had sight of our letter and could you kindly forward our request for a meeting to Christina McKelvie on our behalf please?

Le meas

[redacted], Comhaltas in Britain [redacted]

[redacted], [redacted] , Conradh na Gaeilge Glaschú  
(as béarla: [redacted], Gaelic League, Glasgow)

[redacted], Call it Out: the campaign against anti-Irish racism and anti-Catholic bigotry

[redacted], Coiste Cuimnheachain An Gorta Mór  
(as béarla: Great Hunger Memorial Committee)

[redacted], GAA Scotland

[redacted], Irish Diaspora in Scotland Association

[redacted], Article 12 in Scotland

Call it Out

The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

7. Ministerial response to Call it Out about arranging a meeting – August 2020



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

Minister for Older People and Equalities

Christina McKelvie MSP

T : 0300 2444000

E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

[redacted]

Our Reference: 202000074666

Your Reference: Letter to ERG

19 August 2020

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email of 05 August on behalf of Irish community groups, to Christina McKelvie

MSP, Minister for Older People and Equalities, requesting a meeting to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on Minority Ethnic groups, and the work of the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity.

Unfortunately, due to diary pressures Ms McKelvie is unable to meet with you. She has asked her officials to meet with you, and if this is acceptable to you, I should be grateful if you would contact [redacted] in the Equality Unit on [redacted] or by email at [redacted] to make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

**Assistant Private Secretary**

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG

**8. Email from Call it Out enquiring about the response included as item 7 – 8 September 2020**

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]

**Sent:** 08 September 2020 09:38

**To:** Public Engagement Unit <[CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot](mailto:CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot)>

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** Re: Your Recent Enquiry with Scottish Government and partner agencies

Dear Madam/Sir

I believe we are now beyond your published response timescale of 20 working days. Can you advise me when we will receive a reply?

I have copied in the appropriate civil servant, [redacted], who despite having our correspondence addressed directly to her in her capacity as serving the Expert Reference Group on Covid 19 and Ethnicity, decided to put it in to this generic mailbox - an action which we regarded as insulting and disrespectful.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

On behalf of the named Irish community organisations

Replying to:

On Wed, 12 Aug 2020, 14:33 , wrote:

Our Reference: 202000074666

Your Reference: Letter to ERG

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your correspondence sent on 05/08/2020. Your query will be passed to the relevant area for consideration and has been given a reference number of 202000074666. Please quote this number in all correspondence. The Scottish Government aim to respond, where necessary, as quickly as possible and within the stated timescale as indicated on our website (<http://www.gov.scot/about/contact-information/how-to-request-information/>).

Yours sincerely

MiCase

Correspondence system for SG and partner agencies

The Scottish Government takes your privacy seriously. You may have written to us because you have a question or want to make a complaint. Our privacy notice (<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/contacting-the-scottish-government-handling-your-data>), available on our website, sets out how we use your personal data, and your

rights when communicating with us. It is made under Article 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

**9. Response from the Public Engagement Unit of the Scottish Government to Call it Out, attachment referenced is a duplicate of document 6, above. – 8 September 2020**

**From:** Public Engagement Unit

**Sent:** 08 September 2020 11:01

**To:** Call-It-Out [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Your Recent Enquiry with Scottish Government and partner agencies

Dear [redacted]

A response to this MiCase was issued 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020 which I have attached for your convenience. Within this, there is information which I hope you will find useful.

There is a central system, MiCase, where correspondences sent to the Scottish Government are processed through. Your initial email, while sent directly to [redacted], was added to the MiCase correspondence system in the same way as all others.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

Performance Manager



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

**Public Engagement Unit**  
Ministerial Private Office

**10. Email response from Call it Out to the Public Engagement Unit – 8 September 2020**

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]

**Sent:** 08 September 2020 15:17

**To:** Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Re: Your Recent Enquiry with Scottish Government and partner agencies

Dear [redacted]

I can assure you this response was not received by us. As regards [redacted], she had already been in correspondence with us and this response does not address all the matters we raised in either the first email or the follow-up email, therefore, we remain of the view that the treatment of our community has been both insulting and disrespectful.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

## 11. Further correspondence between the Scottish Government and Call it Out concerning a ministerial meeting – 28 September 2020

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 28 September 2020 08:17  
**To:** Call-It-Out [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting with the Irish community organisations

Good morning [redacted]

I do apologise for the delay in responding to you. My colleague [redacted], copied, will be taking this forward, and will be in touch shortly to arrange a date for this discussion.

Kind regards,  
[redacted]

Equality Unit | Equality and Human Rights Division | Scottish Government | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh  
| EH6 6QQ | 0131 244 3634 | [redacted] |

**From:** Call-It-Out  
**Sent:** 26 September 2020 19:17  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Fwd: Meeting with the Irish community organisations

Dear [redacted]

When do you anticipate that we will receive a substantive reply from you in response to the email below which was sent to you 15 days ago?

Your sincerely

[redacted]  
Call it Out

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Call-It-Out** [redacted]  
**Date:** Fri, 11 Sep 2020, 13:29  
**Subject:** Meeting with the Irish community organisations  
**To:** [redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I understand that having been in contact with you directly, then passed on to a generic mailbox, then refused a meeting with the Minister, we are now being asked to contact you again to organise a meeting with her officials.

I would appreciate it if you would provide us with the dates which would suit your side for the meeting and I will consult with the other Irish groups to finalise arrangements.

Yours sincerely  
[redacted]

Call it Out  
The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

## 12. Emails between the Scottish Government and Call it Out about proposed stakeholder engagement meetings – 10 November 2020

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 10 November 2020 17:05

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Race Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum and within Schools - Meeting 3

[redacted]

Thank you for getting in touch. I have now contacted you separately to explain that tomorrow's meeting is one of three consultation meetings with the same agenda that we have arranged to enable an initial discussion about race equality and diversity in education with partners and stakeholders. These will be followed by meetings with Scottish Ministers. As there are a wide number of people that could potentially be involved in the discussion we arranged three separate meetings to maximise the opportunities for people to get involved. Each meeting has followed the same agenda and covered similar discussion topics, with some variation depending on participants. Some of the people coming tomorrow will have been at one of the previous meetings and some have not. We will produce a report of the three meetings and send it to all participants for comment and agreement afterwards.

Please accept my sincere apologies that this was not clear.

I look forward to meeting you tomorrow.

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 10 November 2020 12:43

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** Re: Race Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum and within Schools - Meeting 3

Now that you draw this to our attention [redacted]. I share a similar experience to you as well.

I am also interested in the email trail for this as well.

Regards

[redacted]

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

On Tue, 10 Nov 2020 at 12:38, [redacted] wrote:

Dear [redacted]

I do not appear to have received any previous invitation to this series of meetings. Perhaps I have missed the email. Are you able to say what was in the subject line of the email and do we have a note of the previous sessions?

Best wishes

[redacted]

----- Original Message -----

From: [redacted]

To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Sent: Monday, 9 Nov, 20 At 14:44

Subject: Race Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum and within Schools - Meeting 3

Good evening

We're looking forward to the third ***Race Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum and within Schools Engagement Meeting*** on **Wednesday 11 November, at 10 a.m.**

Please find attached a copy of the agenda and the discussion paper for the meeting.

Due to uptake we have decided to run with this session and not the 1500 to 1700 or 1600-1800 call on Wednesday that I have referred to in previous correspondence. If you're unable to make this meeting, we will look into arranging an opportunity for you to participate.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We look forward to meeting you all.

Best wishes,

[redacted]

Full details on how to join the meeting are below:

To join the meeting you can register through the email you should have received last week from "SG Curriculum Division" directly from WebEX, alternatively you can use the link below to join the call on Wednesday morning.

<https://scottishgovernment-gge.my.webex.com/scottishgovernment-gge.my/j.php?MTID=mb10d830651985bb640e24acf99b71506>

**Scottish Government Curriculum Division changed the Webex meeting information.**

When it's time, join the Webex meeting here.

Meeting number (access code): 163 222 1231

Meeting password: Gd8BP6qqay8 (43827677 from phones and video systems)

Friday, June 26, 2020

2:00 pm | (UTC+01:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London | 3 hrs

Join meeting

There are a few things to bear in mind in regard to joining.

1. The easiest way to join is to open the email diary invite and click on the green 'join meeting' button (example picture above). This will open up the meeting in a web browser window and you simply need to follow the instructions on the screen. Once you join the meeting you will have full access to video, audio and the chat function.
1. If you join through the 'join meeting' button you will be asked to enter your name and email address. Can attendees please make sure that their name is clearly entered as this makes it easier for others to see who has joined the discussion.
1. If you are unable to join in this way the diary invite also includes instructions for joining by phone or a video device. This includes the relevant passcodes that need to be used (example picture below). It would be helpful if you could let me know if you are planning to join by phone or other device and then I can know to expect you.
1. I will open up the meeting from 10.45 pm on Wednesday so attendees have plenty of time to join the meeting and overcome any technical glitches.
5. If you are having difficulties hearing people can you please try leaving and re-joining the meeting, this occasionally happens however by leaving and re-joining you should not experience the issue again.

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Good evening

Please accept this invitation to join meeting 3 of the Race Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum and within Schools engagement series on **Wednesday 11 November from 10am to 12pm.**

Yesterday I contacted many of you to ask if you would prefer a morning or afternoon timeslot – The consensus appears to suggest a meeting at 10am would suit best. However, for those of you that are unable to attend next Wednesday morning we will

look to arrange an alternative meeting to provide you with the opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Over the coming days I will circulate the WebEx link, joining instructions and the relevant papers for the meeting.

Best wishes,

[redacted]

Curriculum Unit | Learning Directorate | [redacted]

\*\*\*\*\*  
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13. **Combined minutes of stakeholder engagement sessions held by the Scottish Government Directorate for Learning in October and November 2020, which were attended by representatives from Call it Out.**

## **Race Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum and within Schools**

### **Stakeholder Engagement Sessions**

#### **1. Overview**

Over June and July 2020, the Scottish Government (SG) Learning Directorate received over 1,000 emails and letters on the subject of teaching Black history, race equality and racism in Scotland's schools.

In addition, the Government's Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity recommended that Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) be updated to include specific references to Black history and heritage in Scotland globally and to demonstrate how this manifests in present day Scotland.

Responding to these concerns, John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, issued a statement in July and committed to meeting stakeholders to discuss these issues:

<https://blogs.gov.scot/education/2020/07/14/Black-history-in-scotlands-curriculum/>

In advance of that meeting, officials in the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate, and Equality Unit and Education Scotland invited key people and organisations from the race equality and education sectors to consider the range of issues raised in the correspondence. These sessions were held virtually on 3 separate dates – 28 October, 4 and 11 November 2020.

The virtual sessions aimed to provide an initial forum for Scottish Government officials and partner organisations to hear and consider the expertise and experience of participants on how the content of the curriculum, the diversity of the education workforce and the wider policies and culture of a school impact on race equality.

Scottish Government officials followed up separately offering additional opportunities to contribute to those individuals and organisations that were unable to attend the main group sessions.

This report seeks to bring together the main discussion points and themes from all three meetings, alongside key points from a series of smaller stakeholder meetings.

Following circulation of a draft meeting note, comments on the draft were invited. Any comments received are listed at **Annex B**.

## 2. Welcome and Introductions

The meetings were chaired by [redacted], Head of Curriculum Unit and [redacted], Head of Teacher Education and Leadership both from SG Learning Directorate, and attended by a number of officials also from the Learning Directorate, SG Race Equality Team, Education Scotland and representatives from the SG Race Equality Network (REN). The list of stakeholders and partner organisation attendees is noted at **Annex A**.

It was acknowledged that others may be keen to be involved and suggestions for any other key individuals or organisations that should be part of the engagement were welcomed.

It was recognised that the issues to be discussed were of significant importance and also sensitive, complex and deep-rooted. The Scottish Government Chairs of the meetings welcomed the expertise, wisdom and lived experience that those participating would bring, and thanked everyone for attending.

## 3. Background and Scottish Government Commitments

A discussion paper was prepared and issued to all participants setting out the race equality issues raised and the activity and commitments in place across the Scottish Government to address them, this can be accessed here:

[attached document redacted – not in scope]

In summary:

- The Scottish Government is committed to tackling racism, eliminating racial discrimination, increasing diversity in the teaching profession, advancing equality, and ensuring that diversity and equality are at the heart of policies that underpin all aspects of school education in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government has committed to do more to improve the way that race equality issues are addressed within the school education system.
- John Swinney MSP, the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Education and Skills, is committed to meeting with stakeholders in early 2021 to ensure that we do all we can to address the significant concerns that have been raised with us in these meetings and through correspondence. In advance of the meetings, officials are engaging with stakeholders to discuss work already underway and understand where opportunities exist to do more as an initial step in the process.

- The Scottish Government recognises that the range of issues raised by stakeholders are intrinsically linked and cannot be tackled in isolation. The issues include:
  - **Curriculum** – concerns around consistency and breadth and depth of teaching about Black history and heritage including Scotland’s role in colonialism and the slave trade, representation of diversity across the curriculum, and anti-racism education.
  - **Diversity in the Teaching Profession and Leadership** – diversity of representation, at all levels, and the racial awareness and competence of the profession.
  - **Racism and Bullying** in schools and how this is addressed.

#### 4. Introductory Context: Young People’s Experience

At the beginning of each session, young people from Intercultural Youth Scotland (IYS) and the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) shared personal reflections on their experiences of learning, teaching and racism and outlined what they wanted these discussions to achieve. Evidence was highlighted from the Intercultural Youth Scotland Insights report <https://interculturalyouthscotland.org/in-sight-report>, expanding on the points it contains. The young people gave first-hand accounts of racism and bullying and highlighted a range of issues that they had encountered:

- a lack of understanding and support from guidance and subject teachers,
- racism and bullying dismissed or not acknowledged as such;
- the issue of not having teachers of colour that they could approach for support and understanding;
- no clear policies or guidance to record and respond to racism;
- not being encouraged or supported to realise their full potential;
- being subjected to racial stereotyping;
- the impact of no visible diversity among teachers;
- not feeling welcome within the school or wider community; and
- the potential cumulative mental health toll of all of these issues.

The young people also talked about a failure to meaningfully and sensitively include Black history in the curriculum and a lack of positive examples and contexts of Black history and heritage being taught. When it was approached in the classroom, the experience had been unintentionally handled badly or insensitively which proved traumatic and caused harm, at times with images, language and assumptions being inappropriate. Overall, the young people described an education system that they feel is currently failing young people of colour.

The young people were thanked for their contributions, with recognition of how difficult it is to talk about traumatic personal experiences. The Scottish Government committed to continue to put the voice and experience of young people at the centre of any possible next steps.

## **5. Introductory Context: Overview of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)**

[redacted], Senior Education Officer for Social Studies at Education Scotland, provided a history and context of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in Scotland and how learning and teaching is currently delivered in schools.

Key to the CfE is the ambition to support young people as they learn and develop to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. CfE supports learning and achievement in a variety of contexts and settings. In schools, teacher professionalism and judgement means that they are best placed to develop a curriculum and resources that are 'right for their class' within the framework of experiences and outcomes developed by Education Scotland. The flexibility that this allows enables learning to be tailored to pupils and responsive to their individual needs and the local setting.

The areas within the Social Studies experiences and outcomes where Black and other Minority Ethnic history and race equality might be explored, were highlighted.

## **6. Introductory Context: Race Equality Action Plan**

[redacted], Equality in Education Team Leader and [redacted], Race Equality Team Leader, provided an overview and an update on the REAP.

The Race Equality Action Plan (REAP) sets out the Scottish Government's approach to promoting race equality and tackling racism and inequality. In the published REAP, 26 of the actions relate to Education and Lifelong Learning, including Staff Resources, Anti-Bullying, Staffing and Staff Development. The REAP is now in its final year and a final report on progress will be made to Parliament in 2021.

Participants were assured that points raised during these discussions would help inform the next iteration of the REAP from 2021-2025.

## **7. Main Discussion: Curriculum, Diversity in the Teaching Profession, Racism and Bullying**

It was recognised that the issues covered within the discussion paper that had been circulated – curriculum, diversity in the teaching profession, at all levels and racism and racist behaviour in school are interlinked and need to be addressed together. However to provide structure to the discussion, participants were asked to consider each one in turn as well as their interactions.

Policy leads introduced each of the policy areas, providing a summary of ongoing work and commitments and then opened up for wider discussion based around the following key questions:

- to what extent are the current frameworks, drivers, partnerships and resources addressing the Scottish Government ambitions,

- where are the gaps and failures,
- what actions could the Scottish Government (and partners) take to address them?

### Curriculum

[redacted] from the Curriculum Unit in the Learning Directorate reiterated the flexible framework that Curriculum for Excellence provides and the opportunities for teachers to explore diversity throughout the curricular areas, including teaching of Black and Minority Ethnic history within the social studies curriculum and its impact on modern society.

It was emphasised that schools and head teachers are responsible for the curriculum in their schools. Therefore, support for schools and school leaders is key to having better teaching and learning about race equality and a more diverse teaching of history.

[redacted], HMI/Lead for Equalities, explained how Education Scotland are working to exemplify how race equality can be addressed through whole-school approaches, from age 3 to 18 and outlined two key pieces of on-going work. The first is a whole school race equality resource to support practitioners of all learners, aged 3-18 years with the principles of race equality education and has been created in partnership with CRER and BEMIS. They have developed an associated quick reference guide to key resources for practitioners to support investigations into Scotland's Black history and teaching about minority ethnic heritage culture as well as the slave trade and Scotland's role in it. This work was paused for a while, as a result of the pandemic, but the resource is now out for consultation.

The second piece of work takes a curriculum mapping approach, also for all learners, 3-18. This work is in its early stages and seeks to identify where there are opportunities, both in the classroom and across learning experiences in the wider school community, to promote race equality, identify any gaps and consider what professional learning and further resources are required. This work is being carried out with partners including The Anti-Racist Educator, SAMEE and IYS. [redacted] stressed the importance and need to take time to get this important piece of work right.

### Diversity in the Teaching Profession

The value of having teachers of colour within schools had been made clearly by the young people at the outset of the meeting, and with less than 2% of the current teaching workforce from a Black and Minority Ethnic background, it was acknowledged that there is still much to do to address the issue of underrepresentation in Scotland's schools, at all levels. [redacted] provides secretariat support on behalf of Scottish Government to the Diversity in the Teaching Profession Working Group, chaired by [redacted], and gave an update on the progress and next steps of this group.

The working group has been in its current form for nearly two years. Membership of the group is made up of universities, race equality organisations, local authorities and unions.

As the group will conclude in early 2021, it is assessing progress and identifying what it sees as priorities for the next 6 months, as well as those challenges and blocks that remain in the system and how the work underway can start to be mainstreamed and continue beyond next March. [redacted] intends to publish a summary of progress and suggested next steps early next year.

An opportunity to discuss any new ways and ideas for how we can increase, retain and support Black and Minority Ethnic teachers, or support racial awareness, which at present is undermined by a lack of confidence amongst the predominantly white profession, was offered to the meeting.

### Racism in Schools and Bullying

[redacted] from the Support and Wellbeing Unit in the Learning Directorate updated participants on the activity currently being undertaken to address racist bullying in schools. This includes a new national approach to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying in Scottish Schools in August 2019.

A formal evaluation of this approach will be carried out in 2021 to assess how successfully and effectively the new system has been introduced and whether any changes are needed. This is being taken forward by the Scottish Advisory Group for Relationships and Behaviour in Schools.

Scottish Government would like to see the outcomes from this work before engaging further with stakeholders in this area.

[redacted] also highlighted the guidance that had been jointly produced by CRER and respectme in 2019 on how to effectively address incidents of racist bullying in schools <http://respectme.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Addressing-Inclusion-Effectively-Challenging-Racism-in-Schools.pdf>. In addition, it was reported that respectme are taking forward work to develop specific anti-racist bullying training, following a meeting with representatives of IYS.

## **8. Summary and Key Points from Discussions**

Discussion across the three meetings provided rich and valuable insights into the issues that were affecting young Black people and young people of colour in schools. The following summary attempts to capture these as well as some of the emerging actions that were suggested to ensure change:

### Overall issues

- The issues that are being discussed are not new, and approaches and interventions designed to address race equality in the past have not had the required impact. Urgent and inclusive action is required.
- Important to define role, responsibility and accountability of key central and local government organisations and agencies.
- In order to realise meaningful change young people's experience of racism has to be at the heart of anything we do to take the work forward. It is important for

young people to have a prominent role in these meetings and in any follow up process.

- Many of the issues raised are long standing and intertwined. There is a sense that given the long-standing nature of the issues raised, work to address them needs to be resourced and there needs to be cross-sector leadership, ownership, drive and accountability for effecting change, with urgency and imperative applied.
- It was suggested that consultation undertaken while developing the Race Equality Action Plan, could have been more inclusive of young Black and Minority Ethnic voices and we need to learn lessons from this going forward. The plan from 2021 must be ambitious, measurable and involve people with experience of education and anti-racism from the outset, including young people.
- Important to take an intersectional approach to the issues, although it is also important for race equality not to be subsumed into more general treatment of equalities issues
- Dealing with all the different aspects will be a significant challenge and needs a strategic response. A suggestion was made to consider forming a race equality expert reference group in education, with links to wider race equality, led by young people.
- The importance of engaging parents in this work – if children see positive interaction at the school gate and in the community, this will have a positive impact in longer term.
- The use of the term Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) refers in practice only to skin colour and is not fully inclusive. If we are to have a discussion about including issues of colonialism and imperialism on the impact on minority ethnic communities which persist to this day, then we need to be clear about the scope of this work. The approach needs to be driven by a commitment to equity (not just equality) and creating the environment which empowers Minority Ethnic people and communities.
- The International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reviewed GB and Northern Ireland policy and practice in 2016 and recommended that governments: a) Strengthen efforts to eliminate all racist and bullying and harassment in the State party's schools, including by requiring schools to collect qualitative and quantitative data on bullying and school exclusions on grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, and to use the data to develop concrete strategies; b) Ensure that schools comply with their public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to challenge racist bullying and to promote respect for diversity, including through the training of educational personnel; c) Ensure that the school curricular across its jurisdiction contain a balanced account of the history of the British Empire and colonialism, including slavery and other grave human rights violations. Progress is due to be assessed in 2021.

## Curriculum

- The impact of the way Black history and heritage is taught on young people from those backgrounds is profound. For example, even though well intentioned, some of the images and content in the Education Scotland Black History professional resources for teachers were raised as potentially traumatic if used directly with young people.

- The flexibility of CfE, whilst providing opportunities for teaching of Black history, was felt to have too much scope for freedom and interpretation that allows teachers not to cover the topic or engage in critical conversations. While teachers may have the desire to challenge, and to instil the ability to challenge in pupils, it was felt that CfE didn't provide a strong enough framework or prompts to ensure they do this.
- The "busyness" of the curriculum in primary schools was highlighted as a potential barrier to covering race equality as effectively as necessary. Not due to a lack of commitment but to the pressures from all directions and priorities of literacy, numeracy etc.
- It was felt that young Black people and young people of colour were not experiencing the four capacities of CfE because of a lack of a positive and supportive school environment. It would really useful to explore this in more detail going forward.
- It was agreed that a whole-school approach is essential – we can't just wait till senior phase to offer anti-racist teaching and pro-Black education. Also need to bear in mind that young people choose different pathways, courses and qualifications so will have different experiences after S2/S3.
- Black history does not tackle the root cause of racism when it is focused simply on slavery. Reducing Black history to the slave trade can create or reinforce an impression of Black people as victims who need 'saving'; this does not empower young Black people.
- Contexts should include empowering examples of global history as well as recognising achievements and the positive role of Black people and people of colour across UK and Scottish history and should be visible across curriculum learning, not just in history
- Anti-racism, separate to Black history, is an area of the curriculum that is missed. Good quality resources need to be designed to support all ages and stages, right from the early years so that race equality is addressed in a systematic way and built into the whole curriculum – it should not be ad-hoc or depend on individual teachers championing it. Young Black people should be central to the process of creating resources.
- Whilst there is a willingness among many teachers there is also a nervousness of getting it wrong, teachers need exemplary leadership on creating a culture and delivering responsive and relevant teaching and must be provided with support and training on how to use resources confidently and effectively.
- Good practice examples would be very effective in promoting more consistency and quality of teaching and learning on these issues – How do we identify these and make them available to practitioners?
- Without explicit experiences and outcomes, how do we monitor whether Black history is being taught or not? Might making it examinable provide a stronger reason for teachers to focus on it?
- This isn't just about social studies and teaching Black history but rather embedding a culture and an understanding of race equality issues, led by race cognisant teachers, into teaching and learning across the curriculum, for example what fiction is being covered in English literature, what pioneers and influencers are being used in expressive arts, all needs to be explored.

- Schools should be supported to seek the involvement of people with lived experience, possibly via Third Sector Organisations, as a way of addressing some of the workforce visibility and positive role model issues highlighted.
- The inspection process has an important role in terms of gathering evidence of effective practice and areas of improvement and in challenging practice or addressing behaviour that doesn't meet standards.

### Teaching Profession

- Professional learning for teachers is key to ensuring confidence and effective teaching and learning of race equality and Black and ethnic minority history and the creation of responsive and sensitive learning environments.
- Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes – improvement needed in how well these are preparing teachers to develop deeper understanding and be actively anti-racist. Anti-racist education needs to be integral to the full programme.
- ITE content needs to be robust in order to avoid running the risk of the perception that covering race equality as part of a teaching qualification automatically means that teachers are racially competent.
- Diversity in the teaching profession – young people shared their personal experience of the impact of never having been taught by a teacher of colour, this extended to areas like guidance/support as well.
- Increasing diversity in the teaching profession is integral to effecting change and improvement, including as relatable role models for young people. At the same time, it is important that the burden of making sure teaching and learning is anti-racist cannot only fall on the Black and Minority Ethnic teachers.
- Systemic change is going to take time, and so in the meantime, a strong network of white allies should be built.
- Breaking down barriers and interview bias for Black and Minority Ethnic educators – Local Authorities and Senior Leadership Teams should be supporting and encouraging Black and Minority Ethnic teachers to apply for development and progression opportunities.
- Seek to remove other blocks into teaching, such as visa restrictions which can be encountered by Black and Minority Ethnic teachers.
- We can use the example of tackling gender bias in STEM being taken forward under the STEM strategy, and consider how to bring in Black and Minority Ethnic role models from outside the school setting.
- Meaningful change in the curriculum and bullying points noted could begin to address the reluctance of young people of colour to re-enter the education system as adults; some choose not to be part of an education system that hasn't felt inclusive or supportive as a pupil, and we need to ensure that Black and minority ethnic young people are given advice and encouragement that promotes the value of a teaching career.
- Black and Minority Ethnic teaching students need to be better supported throughout their degree and postgraduate course to become a teacher, as they may experience 'racism' during their teaching practice and in schools.
- Black and Minority Ethnic probationers need to be better supported by local authorities and school leaders during their probationary year to ensure that there are no additional barriers to their achievement, for example sometimes

schools/SLT do not understand the cultural and religious duties that Black and Minority Ethnic probationers have to carry out.

### Racism in Schools and Bullying

- Significant concerns raised about young people's experiences of the way that racist behaviour is recognised, addressed and recorded in schools.
- There is a lack of feedback to young people after they have reported an incident. This in turn can lead to Black and Minority Ethnic young people having no confidence in reporting the incident as their perception is that nothing has been investigated and/or recorded.
- An important distinction was made between racism and bullying, the motivations behind them and the need for different approaches and responses. Experience from people affected states that a lack of clarity and protocol means handling comes down to local leadership and teachers in the school and whether they deem it racism or not.
- We need to consider and support class teachers' and the senior leadership team's role in tackling racist incidents and comments. In some instances, class teachers lack the confidence, knowledge and experience to tackle racist incidents. Issues highlighted prior to the meeting included an ask to make recording of bullying mandatory.
- Equally as important as monitoring and recording an incident, is how well the matter is handled for the young person – this links to teacher's confidence and skills.
- The evaluation in 2021 will help to inform and it will form part of the considerations on next steps.
- We need to recognise and monitor incidents of teacher-to-teacher bullying and occurrences of pupils being racist to teachers.
- The young people that spoke of their experience talked of the mental health toll of bullying, racism and micro-aggressions over a period of years at school.
- Call for step-by-step guides for teachers and young people.
- Need to ensure anti-racism is embedded within a whole-school approach.

### **6. Next Steps**

In closing, a helpful reflection of all 3 meetings was provided by [redacted], Youth Ambassador from Intercultural Youth Scotland :

- Measurable, meaningful, immediate and long term action must come from these meetings;
- We need to make sure there is a whole school approach within the curriculum to teaching of Black history and anti-racist;
- There needs to be diversity in texts and resources;
- Black history needs to be taught in its widest form and done in conjunction with young people with lived experience;
- Training of teachers is crucial – both those involved now and those coming into the system;

- Clear processes need to be put in place urgently for young people to be able to report incidents of racism.

In closing, the chairs expressed their appreciation to all participants for their time and inputs and outlined the immediate next steps:

- A draft note of actions and key points would be circulated following the three meetings.
- A meeting with the Deputy First Minister and the Minister for Older People and Equalities to be arranged in December to set out the issues raised and to consider the next steps. A firm commitment was made to reflect the voices of young people at this meeting.

## FIRST ANNEX TO THE MINUTE AT ITEM 13 – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### Stakeholders and Partners

[redacted], Intercultural Youth Scotland  
[redacted], Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)  
[redacted], University of the West of Scotland  
[redacted], Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)  
[redacted], Scottish Catholic Education Service  
[redacted], University of Glasgow, PhD, Children's Literature and Literacies  
[redacted], COSLA  
[redacted], Scottish Qualifications Authority  
[redacted], CEMVO  
[redacted], University of the West of Scotland and Scottish Association of Minority Ethnic Educators (SAMEE)  
[redacted], [redacted], Intercultural Youth Scotland  
[redacted], Intercultural Youth Scotland  
[redacted], [redacted]- Intercultural Youth Scotland  
[redacted], General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS)  
[redacted], Williamsburgh Primary School, Paisley – [redacted] for AHDS (network of primary school head teachers)  
[redacted], School Leaders Scotland (representing Secondary School Head Teachers)  
[redacted], Coalition for Race Equality and Rights (CRER)  
[redacted] Youth Community Support Agency  
[redacted], Scottish Youth Parliament, [redacted]  
[redacted] Coalition for Race Equality and Rights (CRER)  
[redacted]- Waverley Care – African Health Project  
[redacted], Forth Valley College  
[redacted], University of the Highlands and Islands  
[redacted], Progress in Dialogue  
[redacted], Modern Studies Teacher, Inverkeithing High School  
[redacted], Intercultural Youth Scotland  
[redacted], BEMIS Parliamentary Officer  
[redacted], Scottish Youth Parliament  
[redacted], Head of Education, Inverclyde Council  
[redacted], CEMVO Scotland  
[redacted], Scottish Youth Parliament, East Kilbride  
[redacted] Coalition for Race Equality and Rights (CRER)  
[redacted] Dampney, Scottish Youth Parliament  
[redacted], Director of Education City of Glasgow  
[redacted] Intercultural Youth Scotland (Operations Manager)  
[redacted], Anti-Racist Educator  
[redacted], Children in Scotland  
[redacted], Show Racism the Red Card  
[redacted], Chief Operating Officer, The Black Curriculum  
[redacted], [redacted], Portobello High School  
[redacted], [redacted] of Call It Out

[redacted], [redacted], Scottish Black Members - BEMIS  
[redacted], Calabar Education Consultant  
[redacted], Skills Development Scotland  
[redacted], [redacted], Hutchesons' Grammar School, [redacted] The Racist Educator, Board Member of SAMEE and NASUWT representative  
[redacted], Primary School Teacher, Board of Trustees WOSDEC, EIS Rep & Glasgow Committee of Management, EIS Anti-racist Sub Committee & BAME Network  
[redacted], Support for Learning Teacher, Wester Hailes Education Centre representing Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)  
[redacted], Headteacher, St Albert's Primary School, Glasgow

### **Education Scotland (ES)**

[redacted], Registrar of Independent Schools  
[redacted], Social Studies Senior Education Officer  
[redacted], HM Inspector and Lead for Equalities  
[redacted], Head of Inclusion, Equalities & Mental Health

### **Scottish Government (SG)**

[redacted], Curriculum Unit, SG Learning Directorate  
[redacted], Curriculum Unit, SG Learning Directorate  
[redacted] Curriculum Unit, SG Learning Directorate  
[redacted], Curriculum Unit, SG Learning Directorate  
[redacted], Curriculum Unit, SG Learning Directorate  
[redacted], SG Race Equality Unit  
[redacted], SG Race Equality Network  
[redacted] SG Race Equality Network

**SECOND ANNEX TO THE MINUTE AT ITEM 13 – FURTHER WRITTEN  
COMMENTS RECEIVED FOLLOWING CIRCULATION OF DRAFT MINUTE**

- A written submission was received from CRER. This is available on request.
- [comment redacted, out of scope]

**14. Correspondence between the Scottish Government and Call it Out about the NRS COVID statistical update – 11 November 2020**

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]  
**Sent:** 11 November 2020 17:34  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: NRS updated analysis

Dear [redacted]

I saw this earlier this afternoon when it was released. Frankly it raises more questions than answers but hopefully we will be able to explore them when you respond to the matters arising from our meeting on the 13th of last month.

Best wishes

[redacted]

Call it Out  
The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

On Wed, 11 Nov 2020 at 17:05, wrote:

For your information

Please see the link below to the weekly report from the NRS. It also includes (from page 23 of the report) an updated analysis of deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland, by ethnic group.

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

[redacted]

Scottish Government | Equality Unit

07411 429 565

## 15. Email from Call It Out to the Scottish Government, raising questions following a meeting on 13 October – 15 October 2020

On Thu, 15 Oct 2020, 12:04 Call-It-Out, [redacted] wrote:

Dear [redacted]

On behalf of the Irish community organisations represented at the meeting I would like to thank you for your time on Tuesday (13/10/2020). As agreed, we have outlined below the substantive (action) points which came out of our meeting. We began the meeting by confirming our shared understanding of the status of our community as a minority ethnic community covered by the Equality Act, 2010 and the PED of the Scottish Government.

We introduced ourselves and gave a brief outline of the concerns of our community and the long-standing view that we hold that we have been ignored by successive Scottish Governments except in so far as we have, in terms of our ethnicity and majority religion, been viewed through the prism of bigotry and treated as a problem. We gave examples of this treatment, the most recent of which is the conduct and report of the Expert Reference Group on Covid deaths and Ethnicity, the failure of the NRS to conduct a more detailed analysis of what appears on face value to be a higher rate of deaths from Covid among the white Irish and the deliberate exclusion of our community (as well as others such as the Polish and Gypsy Traveller communities) from the statistic quoted on the Census page of the NRS website. The refusal of the Minister to meet with us to discuss our concerns and the length of time it has taken to arrange the meeting with Scottish Government officials are emblematic of this treatment also in our view.

Following our meeting in which we outlined our concerns, asked for responses to our questions and made proposals as to how the Scottish Government might recognise the positive contribution of the Irish community to Scotland in a more substantive way, the following action points emerged.

1. The point of contact is between [redacted] and the Irish community groups via the Call it Out email address until a collective email address is created.
2. We request that the SG tell us how they plan to address the needs of our community in terms of Covid when they have accepted a report from the ERG based on NRS analysis and data which says that the data relevant to our community is not robust, have failed to explain in what way it is not robust and have made no recommendation that robust data be collected/ analysed.

3. We request an explanation of why the BEMIS recommendation that the data for 'white' people be disaggregated so that the different needs of the minority ethnic communities can be addressed was not accepted and who made the decision. A minute of the meeting at which the decision was made should be made available in the interests of transparency.

4. We would like the Minister or Civil Servant responsible for the NRS to instruct them to amend their Census page to accurately state the recorded size of the minority ethnic community as 8% and not exclude us, Gypsy Travellers, Polish people and others on the basis of skin colour by stating it is 4%.

5. We call on the Scottish Government to recognise the Irish community in a meaningful way by including us in discussions of matters which affect us including, but not confined to, Covid 19 relative risk, education, justice, the labour market and economic issues, health, sport and cultural issues. In particular we request that we are informed and consulted with regarding the Race Equality Action Plan 2021-26.

6. We wish to work positively with the Scottish Government and Civil Servants to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of the Irish community, the largest and oldest ethnic group in Scotland, to, among other things, music, dance, sport, education, the NHS, politics and the built environment. We envisage this being a matter for discussion in Parliament and the focus of a series of Government-sponsored/supported events along the lines of the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller History Month. We would like this specifically to be drawn to the Minister's attention. Moreover, we note your comments regarding the role of your department in ensuring that the concerns/needs of minority ethnic communities are shared with other parts of government eg the Cultural Directorate

We should note that we did not discuss the question of British Imperialism/Colonialism becoming part of the school curriculum but we note here that we welcome this and look forward to being centrally involved in discussions as to how material can be developed which addresses this in the context of our community both historically and at the present time.

We would like all of these points to be conveyed to the Minister and an early response would be most appreciated. We emphasise the crucial nature of the timing of the response re Covid given the continuing rise in the rate of infection and the need for our community, and others, to be informed and advised as to the specific risks which we face.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Call it Out: The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

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## 16. Email response from Scottish Government Officials to Call It Out responding to issues raised in item 15

On Wed, 18 Nov 2020 at 21:57, [redacted] wrote:

[redacted]

Huge apologies for the delay in getting this first response to you.

2. We request that the SG tell us how they plan to address the needs of our community in terms of Covid when they have accepted a report from the ERG based on NRS analysis and data which says that the data relevant to our community is not robust, have failed to explain in what way it is not robust and have made no recommendation that robust data be collected/analysed.

The NRS have subsequently published a follow up analysis of the ethnicity data. I note your series of further questions on the analysis and will respond as soon as possible. I will have to liaise with others across Government, including NRS.

3. We request an explanation of why the BEMIS recommendation that the data for 'white' people be disaggregated so that the different needs of the minority ethnic communities can be addressed was not accepted and who made the decision. A minute of the meeting at which the decision was made should be made available in the interests of transparency.

As I explained at the meeting, the recommendations of the Expert Reference Group were formed following discussions within the Group and sub-group and not all suggested recommendations from members were included. However, the final paper included a section on the 'Principles for analysing ethnicity data' which set out the position

“Concerns have also been expressed that data is not always analysed by official statistical agencies in the most appropriate way, with some ethnic groups not being reported. For example, Irish community groups expressed concern that National Records of Scotland did not report COVID-19 mortality risk for the White Irish group. While it is not within the remit of the ERG to adjudicate on the appropriateness of specific analyses, we note the concerns that have been expressed. As such, The ERG acknowledges that “White Minority Ethnic Communities”, such as the Irish, Polish and Gypsy Travellers, are Minority Ethnic communities and should be considered as such in data collation, interpretation and disaggregation.”

This was followed up by a series of recommendations on the analysis of minority ethnic inequalities:

- Monitoring of inequalities by 'race' in line with the Equality Act 2010 should routinely occur and clear lines of accountability should exist for ensuring appropriate monitoring and reporting takes place.
- Intersectionality is important and consideration should be given to reporting social characteristics separately and in combination, whenever possible. For example, this would include also considering religious groups, migrant status, gender and the multiple dimensions of socioeconomic position.
- Consideration should be given to reporting related characteristics in addition, whenever possible. Ethno-religious communities, such as Jewish and Sikh communities, should be better identified and responded to by enabling a religious indicator in data collation. This may also be useful for identifying inequalities in other minority faith groups.
- Clear explanations will be needed when not reporting analyses by ethnicity or when not reporting specific ethnic groups. These may be warranted (e.g. when the number of people available for analysis is too small for meaningful analysis) but explanations should be provided about this in as transparent a way as possible.

4. We would like the Minister or Civil Servant responsible for the NRS to instruct them to amend their Census page to accurately state the recorded size of the minority ethnic community as 8% and not exclude us, Gypsy Travellers, Polish people and others on the basis of skin colour by stating it is 4%.

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture is the minister responsible for the NRS. I understand that you (and others) have discussed this with NRS previously.

5. We call on the Scottish Government to recognise the Irish community in a meaningful way by including us in discussions of matters which affect us including, but not confined to, Covid 19 relative risk, education, justice, the labour market and economic issues, health, sport and cultural issues. In particular we request that we are informed and consulted with regarding the Race Equality Action Plan 2021-26.

We are keen to include the Irish community in discussions across Government, this includes the Race Equality Action Plan 2021-26. The Race Equality Team can help facilitate discussions when needed with different parts of the Scottish Government.

6. We wish to work positively with the Scottish Government and Civil Servants to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of the Irish community, the largest and oldest ethnic group in Scotland, to, among other things, music, dance, sport, education, the NHS, politics and the built environment. We envisage this being a matter for discussion in Parliament and the focus of a series of Government-sponsored/supported events along the lines of the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller History Month. We would like this specifically to be drawn to the Minister's attention. Moreover, we note your comments regarding the role of your department in ensuring that the concerns/needs of minority ethnic communities are shared with other parts of government eg the Cultural Directorate

Agree wholeheartedly on the need to work positively. As requested I have made the Minister aware.

Apologies again for the delay in responding.

[redacted]

Scottish Government | Equality Unit

[redacted]

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]

**Sent:** 17 November 2020 13:07

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** Re: Action points from meeting with Irish community groups 13/10/2020

Dear [redacted]

I wonder when we might receive a substantive reply to the issues we raised with you at our meeting on 13th October and which we set out in writing in our email of 15th October? As you can see below, we sent a reminder on 27th October and I mentioned it again last week when you sent the most recent NRS report.

I am aware that we are all busy but surely in excess of a month is an unreasonable timescale for a response?

In relation to the NRS report, we would like to ask the following questions and we do not wish to be pointed in the direction of the NRS statisticians as this is the responsibility of the Scottish Government and we would like to hear directly from its representatives.

1. Can you explain why the NRS continue to query the ethnicity of those Irish people who identified themselves as such at the last time of asking ie the 2011 Census?
2. Why did the NRS not use the same technique to look at the ethnic minority population as it did for the population as a whole ie an examination of excess deaths?
2. Can you confirm that the statistical analysis the NRS have conducted, and the interpretation of it, is not definitive?
3. Can you confirm that the NRs report, as it stands, does not rule out the possibility that the odds ratio for the White Irish could be as high as 1.69?
4. Do you agree that given this is a life or death situation the policy imperative to engage closely with affected communities and to examine further the reasons for the undeniably high number of deaths should not hang on a single statistical exercise?
5. Are you aware of any other crucial piece of health-related policy which is underpinned by a single statistical exercise?
6. Should you not have erred on the side of caution and begun engaging with the affected communities before now?
7. Why is there not an update of this report which includes the most recent data (another 800 deaths as I understand it)?

We look forward to hearing from you in relation to the earlier matters we raised and the questions raised in this email.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

on behalf of the Irish Community Network (comprising the organisations you met with on the 13th of last month)

Call it Out

The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

On Tue, 27 Oct 2020 at 12:40, Call-It-Out [redacted] wrote:

Dear [redacted]

I wonder when we might expect a response to the matters we discussed in our meeting on the 13th as outlined below in the email we sent on the 15th?

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

## 17. Letter from the Scottish Government to Call it Out responding to issues raised via email – December 2020

Local Government and Communities Directorate  
Equality and Human Rights Division

T: 0131 244 4684  
E: [redacted]



16.12.20

Dear [redacted]

I am writing to respond to the questions you posed to the Scottish Government in October.

Can I sincerely apologise for the delay in responding to you. Please be assured the issues you raise and the engagements we undertake with you and other minority ethnic organisations is extremely important to us and we seek to strengthen these relationships on an ongoing basis.

Please find below the responses to the questions you raised:

### **1. Can you explain why the NRS continue to query the ethnicity of those Irish people who identified themselves as such at the last time of asking ie the 2011 Census?**

When NRS linked census data with registration data there were cases where the ethnicity provided through the census is not the same as the ethnicity provided on the Death Registration form. These inconsistencies were relatively more common in the White Irish group than in the other groups we produced regression analysis for. NRS highlighted the level of inconsistency when discussing data quality.

### **2. Why did the NRS not use the same technique to look at the ethnic minority population as it did for the population as a whole ie an examination of excess deaths?**

The analysis by NRS was done to examine the statistical relationship between ethnicity and COVID-19 related mortality. NRS has not conducted an analysis of all excess deaths or all deaths by ethnicity. The NRS approach reflects the relatively low number of deaths in some groups, the incomplete nature of population and death data by ethnicity, and the need to take account of other factors including age, sex and deprivation.

### **3. Can you confirm that the statistical analysis the NRS have conducted, and the interpretation of it, is not definitive?**

NRS conducted a robust analysis of the available data and reached a robust conclusion based on this data. This analysis was carried out by experienced members of the government statistical service.

**4. Can you confirm that the NRs report, as it stands, does not rule out the possibility that the odds ratio for the White Irish could be as high as 1.69?**

The correct and standard interpretation of the odds ratio is that since the confidence interval includes the value 1.0 within the range, there is no evidence of a significant difference between the White Irish and White Scottish groups. If a single point estimate is required, then 1.24 is the most appropriate figure.

**5. Do you agree that given this is a life or death situation the policy imperative to engage closely with affected communities and to examine further the reasons for the undeniably high number of deaths should not hang on a single statistical exercise?**

The Scottish Government is committed to learning the lessons of the past. This pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on some of our communities and we are determined to do everything we can to understand the data, the support required by communities and what the longer term ambitions are as we recover. This is being done through the ongoing Race Equality Action Plan as well as the work of the Expert Reference Group on Race and Ethnicity, established specifically because of Covid-19. Our Social Renewal Advisory Board has also been engaging with a range of stakeholders including faith, belief and ethnic minority organisations to capture everyone's needs as we seek to recover.

**6. Are you aware of any other crucial piece of health-related policy which is underpinned by a single statistical exercise?**

Every action that the Scottish Government has taken throughout the pandemic has been based on the scientific and medical evidence available and all decisions have been and continue to be for the benefit of the public. In addition, the Scottish Government is obliged to consider the 4 harms determined by the World Health Organisation.

**7. Should you not have erred on the side of caution and begun engaging with the affected communities before now?**

We always seek to consult with a wide range of stakeholders as possible to ensure our policies reflect lived experience. Due to the nature of this pandemic, we acknowledge, this has not always been the case. However, there is evidence of strong engagement with communities throughout the pandemic and we have sought to meet, listen and take forward any concerns as best we can. But, we acknowledge more could have been done and we will do so.

**8. Why is there not an update of this report which includes the most recent data (another 800 deaths as I understand it)?**

The updated analysis by NRS is based on all deaths between the period mid-March to mid-June. As set out in the NRS papers and discussed at the ERG there continues to be concerns about the robustness of some of the very detailed ethnicity data – in particular differences across data sources. Therefore whilst NRS, in response to stakeholder requests, updated the initial analysis it is important to note that these data concerns continue. The NRS is clear that the latest analysis provides a valuable analysis based on over 75% of all COVID-19 related deaths to date, and that it provides a good estimate of the relationship between COVID-19 related deaths and ethnicity in Scotland. The NRS is not currently scheduling an additional analysis, but is not ruling out the option of further work after the second wave has subsided.

I hope you found the above, somewhat, useful.

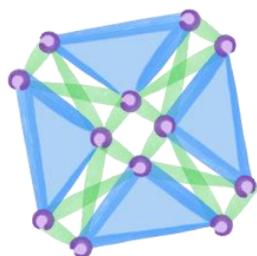
Can I again reiterate our thanks to you for your continued engagement. We will strive to ensure you are involved and consulted upon on key issues and are kept fully informed of new developments. We endeavour to strengthen our engagement with Call It Out going forward. As such, please do not feel obliged to contact the Scottish Government through the normal channels as you may wish to contact me directly via email which can be found at the top of this letter.

Thank you again for writing to us.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]  
Equality Policy Manager

18. **Letter sent to Scottish Ministers by the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network. Call it Out are a signatory – January 2021**



**ETHNIC MINORITY**  
**NATIONAL RESILIENCE NETWORK**

Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Cc: Minister for Older People and Equalities

**RE. Self-Isolation Support Grant (SISG) and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)**

Dear Cabinet Secretary

The Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network (EMNRN) is a union of 87 BME organisations, trade unions, academic and community members working across Scotland to respond to the social and health impacts of COVID19 in our communities.

Since March 16<sup>th</sup> 2020 we have witnessed an unprecedented expansion of destitution within our communities. For example, between March 16<sup>th</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 BEMIS Scotland, with support from the Scottish Government, distributed £32,170 to 243 referrals encompassing 806 individuals. Our records indicate that a significant number of these applicants are subject to NRPF.

Within our network this provision of sub-state welfare support has been mirrored within other organisations such as the Refugee Survival Trust, Dumfries and Galloway Multicultural Centre, PKAVS Minority Communities Hub, Fife Migrants Forum and Glasgow's Empower Women for Change. In short, the unrelenting evidence we are collating within our networks across Scotland is that the punitive NRPF policy is wreaking havoc within our communities.

At the beginning of this pandemic the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, local and national government had to move swiftly to initiate processes that allowed us to respond to the needs of those subject to NRPF. Indeed, in many cases, the Scottish Government recognised this need and reinforced our sub-state provision. However, the EMNRN has also recognised that this provision of sub-state support is not a long-term solution. As such in August 2020 the EMNRN published our community focussed recommendations that outlined the scaffolding required to help Black and Minority Ethnic citizens survive this crisis. In respect of those subject to NRPF we outlined that the Scottish Government should:

- Introduce an emergency sustenance payment to those with No Recourse to Public Funds and minority ethnic communities who require additional financial support in the event of more restrictive lockdowns.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the Expert Reference Group on COVID and Ethnicity, that BEMIS Scotland is a member of, reinforced this priority action to Ministers.

- **Recommendation 1: Emergency Sustenance Fund Payment**

During COVID-19 BEMIS actioned emergency sustenance fund payments to ensure that Ethnic Minority families and individuals were able to access food, medicine, and other supplies regardless of their immigration status. However, the delivery of such a service by BEMIS is not sustainable. The Scottish Government should deliver an emergency sustenance fund using the existing infrastructure of state support for people and families across Scotland. **This may involve using the Scottish benefits system creatively.**<sup>2</sup>

Thus, it has been established at both a community and national level that the requirement for mainstreamed state support for those subject to NRPF is required. While we are fully aware that Immigration law remains a reserved matter the Scottish Government has devolved powers at its disposal that can and should be utilised to support all of those who are subject to NRPF who require additional state support.

At a time of national health crisis NRPF threat is increased to those individuals and families subject to its punitive measures. In addition, NRPF should be considered a matter of national public health.

If we do not provide citizens with the means to adhere to public health advice via the provision of sustenance support then individuals, in desperation to provide for themselves and their families are less likely to isolate, follow FACTS advice and more likely to enhance the danger of continued community transmission of the virus. For these reasons we appeal urgently for Ministers to use the devolved functions empowered to them under section 4 of The Public Health (Scotland) Act 2008<sup>3</sup> to provide a financial settlement to local authorities to provide discretionary payment support to all people subject to NRPF as and when it is required.

For those unable to work this payment should be provided via an ongoing mechanism for the duration of the pandemic. The provision of this payment via a devolved

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mechanism and in the interest of preserving and maintaining public health would not negatively affect an individual's immigration status or application.

In addition, in the provision of the self-isolation support grant any extension of this discretionary payment to individuals identified by our Test and Protect System who

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network Recommendations. August 2020 – available here: <https://bemis.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/BEMIS-EMNRN-ERG-Recommendations-August-2020.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Systemic Issues and Risk: Initial Advice and Recommendations from the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity – Available here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/expert-referencegroup-on-covid-19-and-ethnicity-recommendations-to-scottish-government/>

<sup>3</sup> As Covid-19 was designated as a notifiable disease for purposes of the Public Health (Scotland) Act 2008 in February 2020 the payment of the SISG would be considered as meeting public health need.

are also subject to NRPF must be available to those in work and those not allowed to work. The virus does not differentiate between those in and out of work and as such the provision of state support must be available to all who need it.

If we have identified a mechanism through which to support those subject to NRPF it would be unconscionable were we to retrospectively restrict its provision to a select group of those subject to NRPF.

It is our responsibility to caution Ministers that an unintended by-product of such an approach would disproportionately impact people protected by the provisions of racial discrimination in Scotland on the basis of colour. Those subject to NRPF who are allowed to work are predominantly White Eastern European and European Economic Area citizens. Those most likely to be unable to work due to their immigration status are Black and Brown.

The issue of NRPF has been a thorn in the side of both the Scottish Government and our communities for some time and the ongoing public health crisis has exacerbated this significant inequality. We have campaigned and made representations to both the UK<sup>4</sup> and Scottish Government over the duration of this challenge. As such and given the timeous nature of this urgent call for action we have taken the decision to simultaneously publish this letter into the public domain and share with your office.

We are now entering a critical winter period which will require a national collective effort. As a nation we have a responsibility to adequately support all of the people who reside within our borders with all the powers at our disposal. Now is the time to extend the support of our nation to all people subject to NRPF. For the benefit of their individual physical and mental health and for the benefit of the nation's health. We look forward to an urgent response on this matter.

With respect

[redacted] (BEMIS Scotland)

[redacted] (BEMIS Scotland / EMNRN)

[redacted] –(Intercultural Youth Scotland)

[redacted]- (Youth Community Support Agency)

[redacted]– (The Hope Project Scotland)

[redacted]– (Just Rights Scotland)

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[redacted] (Women in Action)

[redacted], (GRAMNET/University of Glasgow)

[redacted] (Poverty Truth Community)

[redacted] (UNISON Black Workers Committee)

[redacted] (Central Scotland Regional Equality Council)

[redacted], CEO, (Refugee Survival Trust)

[redacted] (PKAVS Minority Communities Hub)

[redacted], (AyeRight)

[redacted] (Stronger Together Social Enterprise)

[redacted] (Call it Out)

[redacted] (Article 12 in Scotland)

[redacted] (Forth Valley Migrant Support Network)

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<sup>4</sup> <https://bemis.org.uk/open-letter-to-pm-on-no-recourse-to-public-funds/>

[redacted] (MECOPP)

[redacted] (East and Southeast Asian Scotland (ESAS))

**19. Email correspondence between Scottish Government and Call it Out about their follow-up questions**

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]

**Sent:** 27 May 2021 15:24

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** Re: Action points from meeting with Irish community groups 13/10/2020

Dear [redacted]

Thanks for your email and we look forward to hearing from you/your colleague further.

Please CC all the above Irish community groups and contacts into any communications.

Best wishes

[redacted]

Call it Out

The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

On Thu, 27 May 2021 at 15:06, <[redacted]> wrote:

[redacted]

I can confirm that your email was passed on to us by [redacted], and one of our managers has been looking into the points you have raised. He will be in touch in due course.

At this stage, however, I'd like to share that we are embarking on planning and preparing a longer-term anti-racist strategy to take us forward into the next phase, following the publication of the REAP report in March of this year. Part of this planning will entail considering stakeholder engagement and consultation, and how this feeds into the strategy development, prioritisation, and implementation. I will pass on this email thread on to my colleagues leading on this work for their consideration and to ensure your views feed into the various discussions.

As I say, my colleague will be in touch shortly to formally respond.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 27 May 2021 14:48  
**To:** Call-It-Out [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Action points from meeting with Irish community groups 13/10/2020

[redacted]

As you anticipated I am no longer in the Race Team and passed your correspondence onto colleagues. [redacted] is the Race Equality Team Leader and I have copied him into this email.

Many thanks

[redacted]

Scottish Government | Directorate for Local Government and Communities

[redacted]

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]  
**Sent:** 27 May 2021 14:37  
**To:** [redacted]; Scottish Ministers <[Scottish\\_Ministers@gov.scot](mailto:Scottish_Ministers@gov.scot)>; Central Enquiry Unit <[CEU@gov.scot](mailto:CEU@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: Action points from meeting with Irish community groups 13/10/2020

Dear [redacted]

I refer you to my letter of 10 days ago, which itself was a follow up from last November. If this is no longer your remit can you please acknowledge receipt of this email and direct me to the relevant civil servant.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Call it Out

The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

On Mon, 17 May 2021 at 11:46, Call-It-Out [redacted] wrote:

Dear [redacted]

I refer you to the response below (dated November 2020) **(included as Item 16)** which you sent in relation to a list of concerns that we raised with you in October 2020. As you will note there are still some outstanding items that require a response and we would like to pursue them. Moreover, in the light of the events in Glasgow at the weekend and the statements from the First Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice regarding anti-Catholic bigotry then we would like to repeat our request for a further meeting to pursue the issues arising and to discuss how our understandable concerns will be addressed by Government.

We believe that a meeting with the Equalities Minister would be helpful at this time and, in your role as our point of contact, we would like you to convey that message to her.

We look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency both in relation to the outstanding matters and in relation to a meeting with the Equalities Minister.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Call it Out

The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism

## 20. Correspondence between the Scottish Government and Call it Out concerning a stakeholder network group.

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 01 June 2021 08:52  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Anti-racism in education stakeholder network group

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email which I'm responding to on behalf of [redacted] who is now on leave.

I'm pleased that BEMIS is sharing the work which the Scottish Government is doing on race equality and anti racism in education with its member organisations.

We were particularly keen that BEMIS sit on the Stakeholder Network Group, given their substantial reach, and close relationships with organisations such as yours. Their role as a Scottish Government Strategic Partner enables them to represent smaller organisations and highlight a range of issues, such as the ones you note below.

We of course encourage and welcome views from all stakeholders and always seek to ensure that all groups affected by our work are involved in consultation. Using Strategic Partners instead of each individual stakeholder, in a practical sense makes it easier to drive progress effectively, which is what we all want. I would encourage you to continue to feed your comments and views to the group via BEMIS.

Best wishes

[redacted]

[redacted]  
Teacher Education, Leadership & Reform Unit | Workforce, Infrastructure & Reform  
Directorate for Learning | Scottish Government  
Area 2B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

**T:** [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]

<https://onescotland.org/equality-themes/advisory-council-women-girls/>

**From:** Call-It-Out [redacted]  
**Sent:** 27 May 2021 14:51  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Anti-racism in education stakeholder network group

Dear [redacted]

<https://www.gov.scot/groups/race-equality-and-anti-racism-in-education-programme-stakeholder-network-group/>

We were alerted to this initiative by BEMIS, of which we are a member organisation, and wondered why our organisation which is a campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism was not included? This is particularly concerning given that we were actively involved in the engagement sessions; that no other group representing our community has been invited and that this is against a backdrop of Scottish Government policy where we continue to be routinely ignored.

In our meeting with [redacted] from the Equalities Unit and six other Irish organisations last year we indicated that this pattern of being excluded from initiatives and discussions which affect our community has been evident for decades. We had hoped that the recent change of language used by the First Minister, the Deputy First Minister and various other senior political figures would herald a new approach to including us in policy matters which are relevant to us. We remain hopeful that this will be the case and therefore look forward to your response.

Best wishes

[redacted]

Call it Out

The Campaign against anti-Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism